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# **7000. CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **Policy Statement**

When there is an established need for a protective substitute care placement, the Department of Family Services (DFS) assures that the placement suits the needs and best interests of the child and is the least disruptive to the current safety, stability, well-being, and long-term permanency of the child and his/her family.

Foster care (related and non-related) is the least restrictive and most homelike placement alternative for children and is the foundation of a substitute care placement options. Non-related foster care includes foster family homes and foster group homes. Both foster family and foster group homes may provide specialized placements, including shelter care, care for large sibling groups, and higher levels of care (HLOCs). Family-based care is diverse, flexible, and cost-effective. Most importantly, family-based care helps to assure individual and caring attention to each child in placement.

Therefore, the Department actively seeks kinship/foster/adoptive families who reflect the diverse cultures, languages, and backgrounds of the children and families it serves through active resource development. This includes recruiting, training, licensing, and providing ongoing support to caregivers. Caregiver Support Services (CSS) provide a variety of peer support activities that promote the safety and stability of children in care, especially the licensing of relative caregivers and the prevention of placement disruptions.

## **For Children and Families**

- The Department supports placement with relatives and, whenever possible, involves parents in placement selection. The Department encourages and supports relative caregivers in the foster family licensing process.
- When a child cannot be placed with a relative, the Department selects from the pool of placement options the setting that can best meet the safety requirements and the unique needs of the child. The Department also considers, when appropriate for the individual child, the closest, most family-like, and least-restrictive placement.
- The Department provides training, information, and support to caregivers to be accepting and supportive of reunification efforts (e.g., visitation), whenever possible.
- The Department assures the timely placement of children with families who have demonstrated that they currently meet minimum safety and caregiving requirements.

- In addition, the Department provides training and ongoing supports and services to caregivers to assist them in developing children's strengths and meeting their special needs through CSS specialists/liaisons and permanency case managers. See *Section 5000: Permanency Services Policies and Procedures*.
- The Department helps children achieve stability and permanency by supporting caregivers during the family reunification process, or, when this is not possible, supporting adoption by the current caregiver or other committed family or individual.

### **For Caregivers**

- DFS seeks active partnership with a diverse group of kinship/foster/adoptive parents and guardians who can provide a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment and who are supportive of children and their families.
- The Department recognizes that caregivers are a valued and essential part of the team caring for children. The knowledge they possess and share about the current strengths and needs of the child is actively sought and considered in Department decision making.
- The Department provides initial support and ongoing peer and professional assistance to relative caregivers and prospective and current foster parents to aid them in assuring the safety, permanence, and well-being of children in their care.
- The Department responds to caregiver requests for child removal with immediate assistance to preserve the placement. If the placement cannot be preserved, the Department will work with the caregiver and child to transition to a new placement.
- The Department supports *Clark County's Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities*. This document provides a clear definition of the mutual responsibilities of the Department and caregivers as they work together to provide care for abused and neglected children.

## **Purpose**

When children have been removed from their parents for care and protection, the identification and selection of a substitute care placement considers federal and state legal requirements and child welfare best practices. In order to offer an array of placement options to case managers and placement specialists, the Department conducts continuing resource development. These procedures promote the development and ongoing support of family-based care (i.e., relative care and family foster homes) and group foster homes for abused and neglected children requiring temporary homes.

When a child out of home care becomes legally free for adoption, the Department works with resource families – relatives, foster families, and others – to develop, prepare, and license safe and nurturing permanent homes.

## Legal Basis

In order to provide clear and consistent information to prospective and active caregivers, all Caregiver Services staff are required to understand and adhere to the federal and state regulations for adoptions and foster family care.

- The primary statute governing subsidized and non-subsidized adoptions is the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 127 and NRS 128.
- The law governing licensing and operation of foster and adoptive homes is contained in the NRS Chapter 424 and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 424.

In addition to adoption and licensing requirements, the two major issues that recruitment, licensing, and CSS staff must be sensitive to are the recruitment requirements of the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) and DFS' placement practices. See *Section 3000: Placement in Substitute Care*.

## Scope

These procedures for CSS govern all support activities of the CSS staff with family caregivers, including: (1) unlicensed relatives, (2) voluntary applicants for Caregiver Licensure, and (3) licensed foster family homes, including families who are caring for children with special healthcare and/or clinical/behavioral needs.

These procedures for CSS do **not** govern:

- Recruitment or licensing of agencies operating residential treatment programs. These programs are licensed by the State of Nevada or the designated out-of-state authority.
- CSS to family or group foster homes supervised by private agencies. When a foster care provider who is supervised by a private agency requests CSS, the CSS staff notify the case manager, the private agency, and the placement unit.
- When the foster home is providing an HLOC, there are separate procedures to manage potential placement disruptions. These are described here and in *Section 3600: Higher Level of Care: Behavioral Health*

## Teaming Approach

CSS liaisons and specialists work closely with case managers and other Department staff in the recruitment and licensing units. The teaming approach is fully described in each subsection below.

The teaming approach to the effective development and support of foster homes requires that each staff member focus on the goal of developing and supporting caregivers to create safe and caring placements for the child(ren) and:

- Complete assigned responsibilities in a timely manner.
- Consistently communicate progress and completion of tasks with other members of the team, especially when there is a risk of placement disruption.
- Trust the judgment of others and offer thoughtful feedback.

Even with good teamwork, differences of opinion must be resolved professionally. When the team has disagreements, problems, or delays, any member of the team may seek the assistance of the manager of recruitment, training, or licensing.

## **7100. Framework for Caregiver Support Services**

### **7110. Staff Role**

CSS are delivered by a team of professional (specialist) and paraprofessional (liaison) child welfare staff. CSS staff provide short-term interventions and support to resource families at designated and specific times and on an as-needed basis at the request of the caregiver. However, because the liaisons are geographically assigned and will have contact at several points in time with family caregivers, they are viewed as an accessible and reliable resource for caregivers.

The CSS staff provide initial and ongoing support to foster families and relative caregivers by telephone and e-mail contact, home visits, and organized events. CSS staff provide professional and paraprofessional support to caregivers to help them navigate DFS requirements for licensing and/or caring for the unique needs of specific child(ren) in their homes and, thereby, promote safety and stability for children in care.

CSS staff do **not** provide case management services to children or biological families. The CSS workers are intervention and support specialists who provide services to family caregivers only when they are needed by and acceptable to the family. Because CSS workers have periodic contact with families from recruitment through placement, they do not carry an active “caseload” and measure their work by contacts.

### **7120. Services**

Services offered by CSS support DFS goals in resource development and promote the stability of children by ensuring that caregivers have access to needed information and available resources. As mentors and advocates, CSS staff offer their services as follows:

- *As Requested by the Caregiver* – The CSS staff will ensure that prospective, newly licensed, and active caregivers are aware of CSS services and how to access them.
- *During Licensing of Relative Caregivers* – The CSS staff will ensure that relative applicants in the licensing process – at initial licensing, renewal, or when there is an active Corrective Action Plan – understand DFS' requirements and how to meet them.
- *At Each New Placement* – The CSS staff will offer information on resources to meet the needs of children newly placed in their home. This includes a resource guide, referrals, and/or a *Foster Parent Handbook*.
- *When a Placement Is at Risk of Disruption* – The CSS staff will offer services and supports to stabilize the placement, including participation in a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting.

Additionally, CSS staff may, from time to time, be assigned to participate in various DFS recruitment or retention events.

## **7130. Teaming Approach**

CSS are provided to family caregivers as part of a resource development team approach.

- Within resource development, the CSS liaison works closely with recruiters, trainers, and licensing staff.
- In placement preparation and support, the CSS liaison collaborates with the Receiving Team and placement specialists.
- For placement preservation and child stability, the CSS specialist works closely with case managers and CFT members.

This teaming approach assures that caregivers: (1) have consistent, accessible, and easy-to-understand information about DFS requirements, (2) have hands-on help meeting administrative requirements and making critical community connections (e.g., early intervention or school enrollment), and (3) have the benefits of practical problem solving based on peer experience. As part of the team, CSS staff must have technical knowledge of specific program regulations and casework concepts and terms and use sound judgment.

No Department staff provide legal advice. When a CSS specialist/liaison is asked about a technical matter that is outside CSS areas of training and job responsibilities, he/she is expected to refer the matter to a supervisor.

## **7200. CSS Recruitment Assistance**

DFS conducts community-based recruitment based on the needs of the children and families that it serves (e.g., geography, cultural heritage, and special needs groups). The availability of CSS

specialists and liaisons to talk about their experiences and CSS services is helpful to all prospective applicants.

## **7210. Teaming Approach**

For recruitment of new homes, the CSS specialist and/or liaison may participate – as assigned and on a time-to-time basis – in community-based recruitment activities. The availability of CSS services and the experience of peers is a powerful incentive to persons considering foster and/or adoptive parenting. Additionally, the visibility of the CSS staff at these events will enhance their role during later licensing and retention activities.

The table below outlines the general responsibilities of DFS staff in coordinating recruitment activities with CSS liaisons. The specific procedures immediately follow.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>
Initiate or respond to requests for variety of presentations (e.g., group events, booths at fairs) on becoming a licensed caregiver.	Recruiter
Prepare presentation format for intended audience.	Recruiter
Invite CSS staff, if needed, through supervisor.	Recruitment supervisor
Assign CSS staff to event, considering location, audience, and availability.	CSS supervisor
Meet to discuss audience and focus.	Recruiter and assigned CSS specialist/liaison
Participate as agreed.	Assigned CSS specialist and/or liaison
Work at annual caregiver celebrations (e.g., foster parent picnic; foster parent appreciation gala; foster parent association meetings, trainings, and events).	CSS specialist and liaison

## **7220. Presentations and Events**

CSS specialist or liaison participation in recruitment can be either at a onetime community recruitment event or at a regularly scheduled event. If the recruitment unit desires the participation of foster parents at an event and a CSS liaison is not available, the recruitment staff will contact a volunteer foster parent.

### **a. Community Recruitment Events**

Community recruitment events can include formal presentations, booths, or fairs.



- The DFS recruiter will schedule the event, design the presentation, and contact the recruitment supervisor to request participation of the CSS specialist and/or liaison at a specific time, date, and location.
- The recruitment supervisor will contact the CSS supervisor or designated staff to request the assignment of a CSS specialist or liaison.
- The CSS supervisor or designated staff will assign a CSS specialist or liaison based on geography whenever possible. When this is not possible, an available specialist/liaison will be assigned. If no CSS specialist or liaison is available, the CSS supervisor will notify the recruitment supervisor, who will access the pool of foster parent volunteers.
- The recruiter will e-mail a confirmation memorandum immediately to the assigned CSS specialist or liaison. The recruiter and assigned CSS specialist or liaison will then confirm in person or by telephone the audience, content, and expected tasks for the specialist or liaison.
- At the event, the assigned CSS specialist or liaison will be prepared to: (1) discuss his/her experience as a caregiver and/or provide an overview of CSS services, and (2) distribute prepared materials.
- The assigned CSS specialist or liaison will include this contact information in monthly reports to the CSS supervisor.

#### **Documentation**

### **b. Regularly Scheduled Events**

DFS conducts regularly scheduled group activities for caregiver appreciation.

- For any agency-wide activity for caregivers, a CSS specialist or liaison may be assigned to serve on a planning committee or work group. The CSS supervisor will provide the purpose, time, date, and location of work hours.
- All CSS specialists and liaisons may be assigned to work at these events. The CSS supervisor will provide the purpose, time, date, and location of work hours.
- The CSS specialist or liaison will include this contact information in monthly reports to the supervisor.

#### **Documentation**

## 7300. CSS Assistance With Licensing

The availability of CSS is an important factor for all families considering becoming licensed caregivers. Some families who have entered the licensing process may feel that licensing standards and required documentation are confusing, unnecessary, or difficult to meet. The CSS liaison can provide important information and hands-on help to those families. This assistance can reduce perceived barriers and unwanted delays.

Once a family has entered the licensing process, the CSS specialist or liaison provides hands-on assistance with the licensing process, especially for relative caregivers. Additionally, the specialist or liaison reaches out to newly licensed caregivers to congratulate them and remind them that he/she will be in touch at the time of the first placement. The availability of CSS services and exposure to peers during the licensing process provides critical encouragement to potential caregivers.

## 7310. Teaming Approach

The table below outlines the general responsibilities of DFS staff in coordinating licensing activities with CSS liaisons. The specific procedures immediately follow.

Tasks	Responsible Staff
<b>Orientation</b>	
Schedule all orientation.	Recruitment supervisor
Deliver orientation module.	Recruiter
<b>Licensing</b>	
Refer all new (emergency or planned) placements with relatives to the specialized licensing unit <b>and</b> CSS.	Receiving Team/placement specialist
<b>OR</b>	<b>OR</b>
Refer open licensing cases of non-related applicants needing assistance to CSS on an as-needed basis.	Licensing supervisor
Assign CSS specialist/liaison, introduce CSS, and provide orientation materials to caregiver.	CSS/training supervisor
Offer to assist caregiver with licensing process and requirements.	CSS specialist or liaison
<b>Welcoming Call</b>	
Refer newly licensed foster home to CSS.	Licensing office specialist.
Offer welcome home visit to newly licensed foster home.	CSS specialist or liaison.

## **7320. Services to Applicants**

The licensing process is highly technical and can be confusing and cumbersome for the applicant. The CSS liaison provides assistance to the applicant upon referral. There are three (3) pathways into licensure for family caregivers: relative placement, application to DFS, and application to a private agency.

### **a. Relative Care Placements**

For all placements into relative care (emergency or planned placement changes), the Placement staff located on the Receiving Team or on the Placement Team provide Placement Clearance, including background checks, a home inspection using a placement safety checklist, and consultation with the parents. The DFS placing agent (case manager or placement specialist) provides the *DFS Pre-Application for Relative Foster Care License* at the time of placement. See *Section 3000: Placement in Substitute Care*.

For all placements into unlicensed relative care, the CSS liaison has a dual role: (1) assisting the caregiver with the licensing application process, and (2) supporting placement stability. This section addresses licensing support. See *Section 7400: Supporting Placement Stability* for a description of CSS tasks with caregivers who have accepted a new placement.

- On a daily basis, the placement specialist will e-mail information on all new relative placements to the CSS supervisor for follow-up.
- The CSS supervisor assigns a CSS liaison by ZIP code within one to two (1 to 2) business days. If the referred kin caregiver has had a prior assignment to a CSS liaison, this assignment continues. In either case, the CSS supervisor concurrently provides e-mail notifications to the assigned CSS liaison with contact information on the caregiver.
- The CSS supervisor concurrently sends a letter to the kinship caregiver: (1) introducing the assigned CSS liaison, (2) providing contact information, and (3) including an information packet with the *DFS Pre-Application for Relative Foster Care License*, *Kinship Caregiving Guide*, and the *Kinship Resource Guide* to all referrals.
- The CSS liaison begins attempting contact by telephone at that time to offer individualized information or general support. If multiple attempts at contact are required, the CSS liaison will make every attempt to call at different times of the day.
- If the CSS specialist/liaison is unable to make contact after three (3) repeated attempts within ten (10) business days, the CSS liaison will send a form letter to the kinship caregiver, copied to the case manager, to provide his/her contact information and offer services.
- If the CSS liaison makes contact, he/she discusses the need for any individualized information or support to complete: (1) both the *DFS Pre-Application for Relative Foster Care License* and application forms, if they have not been submitted, and/or (2) the formal licensing process. In addition, the CSS liaison will offer information about how obtain ser-

vices and supports for the child(ren) in the caregiver's home (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] information and referral, assistance with school registration). As mentors, CSS liaisons also provide information and support regarding family dynamic issues, caregiving expectations, networking opportunities, and support groups and training. At this time, the CSS liaison will offer to schedule an in-home visit with the caregiver.

- The CSS liaison continues to support the caregiver in completing the licensing application process until: (1) help is no longer required, or (2) the licensing application is completed or closed/withdrawn.
- If the caregiver has declined CSS assistance **AND** the licensing application has not been submitted within forty-five (45) days, the supervisor of the specialized licensing unit will designate the case as "inactive" and contact the CSS supervisor to initiate a second attempt at CSS liaison support.
- If the CSS liaison is able to engage the caregiver in the licensing process, he/she will notify the supervisor of the specialized licensing unit, who will reactivate the case.
- All contacts are noted on *Caregiver Support documentation log* within two (2) business days.

## **Documentation**

### **b. Foster/Adoptive Home Licensing**

The licensing worker has primary responsibility for assisting applicants who have voluntarily entered the licensing process. The licensing representative will complete his/her work in a timely and efficient manner in order to accelerate the completion of the licensing process. This includes regular outreach and follow-up with the applicant.

For this reason, it is unlikely that the applicant would need additional assistance from CSS liaisons to complete the licensing process. In the rare case that CSS assistance is needed, the licensing supervisor will contact the CSS supervisor to discuss and arrange an assignment.

### **c. Newly Licensed Foster Family Homes**

Once an unrelated caregiver has been licensed to provide foster/adoptive care, it may be some time before the first placement is made. A letter will be sent out to the newly licensed caregiver, congratulating him/her on his/her license and providing the CSS liaison's name and contact information. The CSS liaison will contact the newly licensed home to: (1) orient the caregiver of DFS placement practices, and (2) remind the caregiver that he/she will be in touch at the time of the first placement.

- The CSS unit is notified by e-mail of each new license approval by a supervisor in the licensing unit.
- The CSS unit supervisor notifies the currently assigned CSS liaison or assigns a new CSS liaison according to ZIP code within ten to fourteen (10 to 14) business days.
- The CSS liaison makes telephone contact with caregiver within two to three (2 to 3) days of receiving the referral. In the telephone call, the CSS liaison:
  - » Provides his/her contact information and explains the CSS liaison role to the caregiver.
  - » Provides a brief review of the *Foster Caregiver Resource Guide and Foster Parent Handbook*.
  - » Assures the caregiver that he/she will call at the time of the first placement and will be available by telephone before and during the new placement.
  - » The CSS liaison will also, at this time, offer to make a home visit.
- If the caregiver expresses his/her intent to only accept adoptive placements, the CSS liaison will notify the CSS/training supervisor and the licensing supervisor and discontinue contact with the caregiver except for temporary, respite-only assignments.
  - » The CSS/training supervisor will notify the recruitment supervisor, who will reach out to the caregiver to more fully explain foster care opportunities.
  - » The licensing supervisor will note the preference for adoption-only placements in the UNITY.
- If the CSS liaison is unable to make contact with the caregiver within five (5) business days, he/she sends a letter to the caregiver, with a copy to the case manager, with contact information and a general offer of assistance.

## **Documentation**

### **d. Assistance With Implementing a Corrective Action Plan**

The Department receives reports of complaints and concerns about a licensed caregiver from a variety of sources (e.g., DFS staff members, other professionals, members of the general public). The report may describe general concerns, allegations of licensing violations, or allegations of abuse and/or neglect.

#### **(i) Investigations of Abuse and/or Neglect by Licensed Caregiver**

If the licensing compliance investigator receives a complaint about a licensed caregiver that indicates possible abuse and/or neglect, he/she must immediately notify the Hotline. Or when a report of abuse or neglect by a licensed caregiver is accepted by the Hotline for investigation, the

licensing compliance investigator is notified. Once a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation of a licensed caregiver is initiated, the investigator will notify the permanency worker and the permanency supervisor.

During an active CPS Investigation of abuse and neglect involving a DFS licensed caregiver, the Department will conduct concurrent investigations by CPS and the licensing unit whenever doing so will not delay, interfere with, or otherwise compromise the CPS investigation. See *Section 2900: Special Types of Investigations*.

During an active CPS investigation of abuse and/or neglect, the CSS liaison may **not** be involved with the family. If the CSS liaison is contacted by a caregiver during an active CPS investigation, he/she will explain the Department's obligation to follow up on allegations and help the caregiver understand the process and why the caregiver cannot be involved. Once the abuse and neglect licensing investigation has concluded and the allegation is unsubstantiated, the liaison will resume contact with the caregiver.

## **(ii) Investigations of Licensing Violations**

When the Department receives a complaint about a caregiver that alleges a licensing violation, the licensing compliance investigator will conduct an investigation according to the procedures in *Section 81000: Licensing Complaint Reviews* and will notify the case manager and supervisor.

If the CSS liaison is contacted by a caregiver during a licensing-only investigation, the liaison may inform the caregiver of his/her rights and responsibilities and refer him/her back to the licensing compliance investigator. Once the licensing investigation has concluded, including any appeals, and the allegation is unsubstantiated or the caregiver has a Corrective Action Plan, the CSS liaison will resume contact.

If the result of an investigation is the development of a Licensing Corrective Action Plan, the CSS liaison will offer to assist the caregiver in meeting the requirements of the plan.

The guidelines for CSS liaison contact with caregivers apply during the formal appeals process.

## **7400. Supporting Placement Stability**

The stability of the placement is at risk at two times: (1) at the time of a new placement when the caregiver is just beginning to learn the strengths and needs of a child who has experienced the trauma of removal or a placement change, and (2) at any time when the needs of the child exceed the caregiver's capacity to respond.

In both of these situations, the case manager has the primary responsibility for preventing placement disruptions through sound foster care case management and by responding to problems that emerge during placement. See *Section 3530: Placement Stabilization of the Placement* in

Substitute Care Policies and Procedures and *Section 5000: Permanency Unit Policies and Procedures*.

The CSS services are available to the caregiver when:

- A CSS liaison makes contact with the caregiver when any new placement is made, whether the new placement is the result of an emergency removal from the family or from a prior placement or the result of a planned placement change.
- A CSS specialist makes contact with the caregiver when there is a risk of disruption identified by the permanency case manager and/or a request from the caregiver.

### **a. Teaming Approach**

The placement specialist, permanency case manager, and CSS liaison and specialist work together to support new placements and to respond to risks to placement stability. The table below outlines the general responsibilities of DFS staff in coordinating placement stabilization activities with CSS liaisons. The specific procedures immediately follow the table.

Tasks	Responsible Staff
<b>New Placement</b>	
Notification of new placement.	Placement specialist
Ongoing case management.	Permanency case manager
Offer of support and resource identification.	CSS liaison
<b>Preventing Placement Disruption</b>	
Ongoing case management.	Permanency case manager.
Identification of risk to placement and notice to CSS liaison.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Permanency case manager <b>OR</b></li><li>• Placement specialist <b>OR</b></li><li>• Caregiver</li></ul>
Offer of support and resource identification.	CSS specialist

## **7410. Supporting the Placement of a New Child in the Home**

Each new emergency placement or planned placement change that introduces a child to a new home – whether the caregiver is experienced or not – creates a change in the family dynamic and adds an element of the unknown. The components of successful placement support at the time of the child's placement are: (1) an understanding of the child's needs and strengths, (2) the capacity and capability of the placement resource to meet those needs and support those strengths and, and (3) services and supports offered by the Department. The responsibility for preparing the caregiver –related or non-related – is as follows:

- For relative care, the case manager (investigator or permanency worker) has the primary responsibility for preparing the caregiver.
- For all other forms of licensed substitute care, the placement specialist has the primary responsibility for preparing the caregiver.

However, the CSS liaison serves an important role as an advocate, mentor, and accessible source of information.

- The CSS unit receives a daily notice of all completed Placement Clearances from the placement specialist on the Receiving Team or Placement Team. The notification of new placements includes the caregiver name, address and telephone number; the names and birth date(s) of the child(ren) placed; and the name of the assigned case manager.
- The supervisor assigns the home to a CSS liaison within two (2) business days by ZIP code.
- The CSS liaison notifies the assigned case manager by e-mail that he/she has been assigned and begins attempting contact by telephone with the caregiver.
- The CSS liaison assists the caregiver when there is an identification of the child's needs that were not identified at the time of placement. The CSS liaison assists the caregiver in the location of DFS and community and Department resources and navigation of processes. Examples of CSS assistance include providing:
  - » Clothing for the child(ren).
  - » Travel and custody letter.
  - » Medical passport.
  - » Childcare or school enrollment processes and contact information.
  - » Contact information for the child's case manager and supervisor.
  - » Contact information for the caregiver's licensing representative (for unlicensed relative caregivers).
  - » Other caregiving issues identified by the caregiver (e.g., behavioral health).
- The CSS liaison documents requested supports and results in the *Caregiver Support documentation log* either by telephone or at a home visit.
- If there are caregiver issues or concerns that could not be addressed by the CSS liaison, these are also noted in the *Caregiver Support documentation log* and discussed with the supervisor. The supervisor will contact the case manager to ensure that these issues are addressed by the case manager or in the next regularly scheduled CFT meeting. If all caregiver issues or concerns are addressed, the referral is closed.



## **Documentation**

### **7420. Preventing Placement Disruptions**

The case manager and caregiver working together have a relationship with the child and best understand the child's need for services. This knowledge shapes a plan to maintain the child in his/her current placement. As part of the case plan, the case manager arranges services and supports the case manager to ensure stability for the child. These services may include:

- Counseling in the home, with collateral contacts for the foster parents to help them facilitate the adjustment of the child to this home and family.
- In-school and after-school programming to continue to develop interests of the child.
- Activities to allow the child to remain involved with his/her social connections and religious community.
- Respite care.
- Early childhood development or other educational interventions.
- Mentoring of the foster child.
- Medical or clinical services.

In addition to these case manager-arranged services, the placement specialist will have contacted the CSS liaison to provide mentoring, peer support for the caregiver, and concrete supports to the caregiver at the time of the child's new placement.

Despite these preventative activities by the case manager and the CSS liaison, a placement may become at risk of disruption. The identification of this risk and the request for assistance will, in the majority of cases, be by the caregiver. The caregiver may contact the case manager, placement specialist, or CSS liaison.

- The permanency case manager becomes aware of a potential placement disruption through telephone or in-home contact with the child, the caregiver, or the biological family or through a formal notice from the caregiver. This referral will be reported to the casework supervisor as part of the case consultation.
- The placement specialist becomes aware of a potential placement disruption through telephone contact or formal ten (10) -day notice from the caregiver.

- As soon as the case manager or placement specialist becomes aware of the risk to placement, he/she will make a referral to the CSS supervisor by completing the *Placement Preservation Referral*.
- If the caregiver self-identifies to the CSS liaison, the liaison taking the request for support completes the *Placement Preservation Referral* and forwards it immediately to the CSS supervisor.
- The CSS supervisor immediately assigns the potential placement disruption to a CSS specialist. If a CSS liaison has been working with the caregiver, the CSS liaison consults with the assigned CSS specialist, but the CSS specialist has lead responsibility for stabilizing the placement.
- The assigned CSS specialist immediately attempts to contact the caregiver by telephone or throughout a home visit to gather detailed information on the issues and concerns of the caregiver (e.g., resource needs, challenges in meeting the needs of the child). The presenting problem(s) will be documented using the *Placement Preservation Review (PPR) Packet*.
  - » The CSS specialist will identify issues within his/her scope of authority that can be addressed immediately, such as clothing, custody; travel letter, medical passport, childcare resource information, and requests for case manager, licensing worker, or supervisory contact information.
- The CSS specialist will take action steps to access services or secure resources to address identified issues. These action steps include requesting a CFT meeting and/or a Placement Resource Team meeting, if necessary. The CSS specialist may participate in the CFT meeting convened by the permanency case manager.
- The CSS specialist who is assigned to a potential placement disruption will notify the CSS supervisor and case manager of all actions taken and the outcomes of the case within three (3) days of the determination of the outcome.
  - » Once the issues are resolved, the CSS staff will complete the "Outcomes" section of the *PPR Packet* and submit it to the CSS supervisor. The supervisor will notify the case manager, close the referral, and document results.
  - » If, in consultation with the caregiver, it is determined that the presenting issues cannot be addressed by the CSS specialist, the CSS specialist will complete the "Outcomes" section of the *PPR Packet* and submit it to the CSS supervisor. The supervisor will notify the case manager of unresolved issues, inform the Placement Team of a potential disruption, close the referral, and document the results.
- The CSS specialist will report on progress at weekly staff meetings and contact the caregiver with weekly status updates.

If the CSS specialist and permanency case manager are unable to stabilize the placement, and the result is a new placement, the placement specialist notifies the CSS supervisor of the new

placement, who responds as described above in *Section 7410: Supporting the Placement of a New Child in the Home*.

## **7430. Disruptions in Private Agency Managed Foster Care**

Private agencies recruit and manage foster homes that are used by DFS for placement. In general, these agencies support caregivers to prevent potential placement disruptions, and CSS staff are not always involved. However, when there is a risk of placement disruption, the caregiver or private agency provider will notify the Department.

### **Caregiver Requests Assistance**

- In the event that a caregiver under the supervision of a private agency directly contacts the CSS liaison or specialist for assistance in stabilizing a placement, the CSS liaison or specialist will notify his/her supervisor.
- The CSS supervisor will send an e-mail and attempt to reach by telephone the:
  - » Permanency case manager.
  - » Private agency managing the home.
  - » HLOC placement specialist or site Placement Team.
- The permanency case manager and the private agency managing the home will work together to stabilize the placement, and there is no further involvement of CSS staff.
- If the permanency case manager and private agency are unable to stabilize the placement, either or both will request a Placement Resource Meeting for problem resolution. See *Section 3000: Placement in Substitute Care Policies and Procedures*.
- If the caregiver asks the CSS staff about a transfer to another agency (public or private), he/she is to be referred to the specialized licensing unit.

### **HLOC Agency (Providing Foster Family or Foster Group Care) Provides Notice of Disruption**

- The HLOC provider will submit the *Notification of Disruption* to the DFS HLOC placement specialist.
- The placement specialist will immediately notify the case manager and supervisor of the potential placement disruption.
- The placement specialist will contact the agency provider by telephone to gather detailed information on the issues and concerns of the caregiver and to inform the agency that he/she will contact the caregiver directly.
- The placement specialist contacts the caregiver directly to gather further information on resource needs and/or needs of the child(ren) that had not been previously identified or addressed. These issues are documented in the *PPR Packet*.

- The placement specialist takes action steps to access services or secure resources to address identified issues whenever possible. These action steps include contacting the case manager to convene a CFT and/or a Placement Resource Team meeting.

Once identified issues have been explored and resolved, if possible, the placement specialist will either continue monitoring the HLOC placement or work with the case manager to make a planned placement change.